DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 201 553 SO 013 296

AUTHOR Phelps, Richard
TITLE Being Prepared: The Application of Character Building and the Beginning of the Boy Scouts of America.
PUB DATE Apr 80
NOTE 26p.: Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (80th, Boston, MA, April 7-11, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Conservation (Environment); History; Males; *Organizational Development; Organizational Effectiveness; *Organizational Objectives; Political Influences; Social Action; Values; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Boy Scouts of America

ABSTRACT

The beginnings of the Boy Scouts are traced, with particular emphasis on ideological foundation, social reform objectives of the founders (Sir Robert Baden-Powell, Daniel Carter Beard, and Ernest Thompson) and its relationship to other reform movements of the Progressive Era. The philosophical base of scouting is characterized as: 1) a preoccupation with history (attraction to the frontier mystique and the pioneer image combined with a fear that western civilization was receding into decay); 2) a belief that modern man was physically, mentally, and morally weak in comparison to his ancestors; and 3) the belief that the necessary catharsis for modern man must take place outside of the industrial cities. Major objectives of the founders were to emphasize conservation (people and values as well as land), encourage education for citizenship, and stress the need for character education to make adolescents immune to the decadent forces of their environment. Currents which influenced the Boy Scouts from its beginning in 1910 through several decades paralleled the currents in American society--namely, antipathy for the state of the nation versus glorification of all things American, social conformity versus individuality, and cooperation versus self-reliance. In addition, the Boy Scout movement was hampered by conflict among those leaders who favored rigorous outdoor activities based on frontier life and other leaders who favored sublimation of outdoor activities to various versions of character building and patriotism. The conclusion is that the Boy Scouts of America was influenced by various social forces affecting American society and also by the change in stated objectives of a series of charismatic, strong-willed, and idealistic leaders. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED201553

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

RICHARD PHELPS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEING PREPARED: THE APPLICATION OF CHARACTER BUILDING AND THE BEGINNING OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

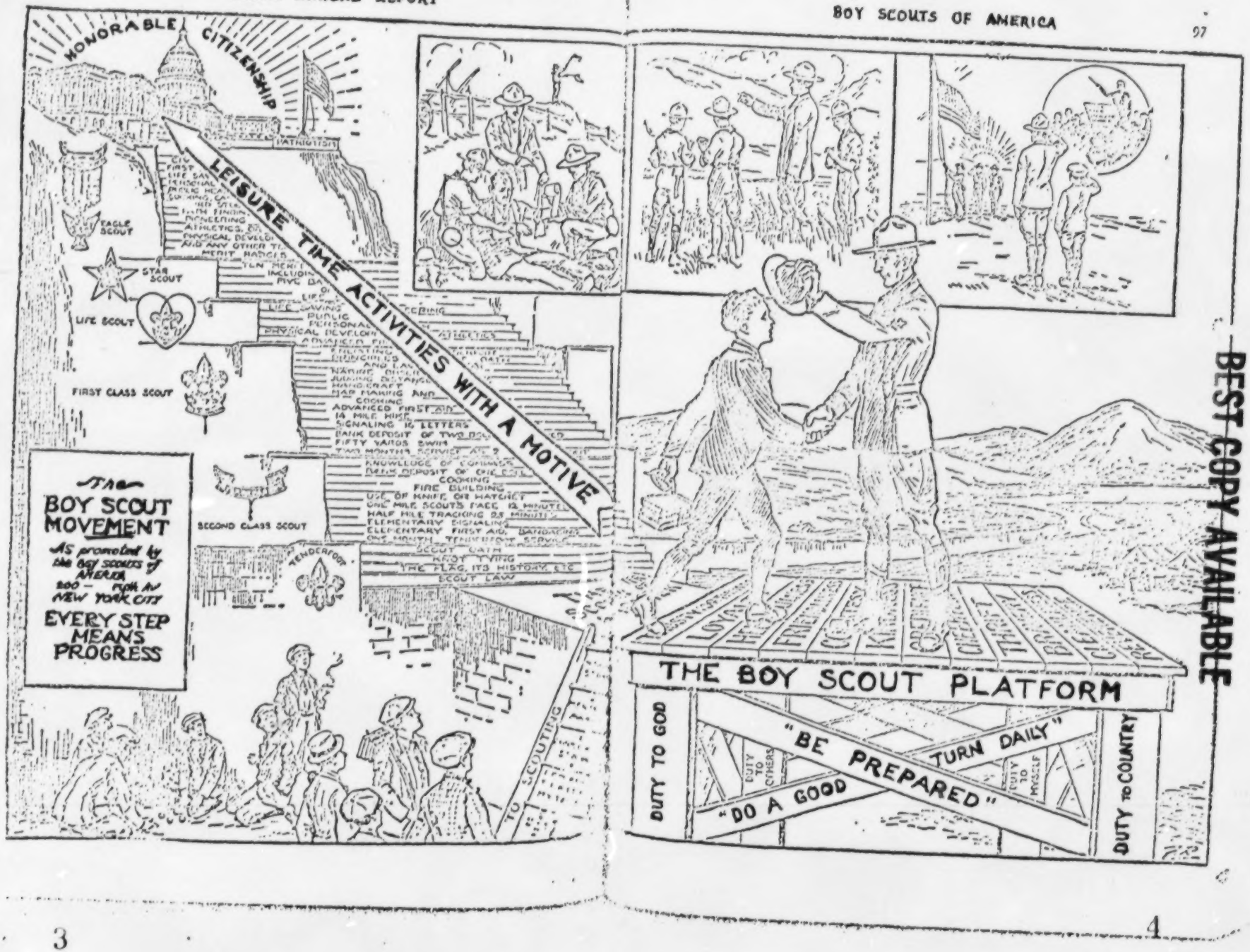
Richard Phelps

Research/Evaluation Coordinator
Division of Educational Information and Research
Indiana Department of Public Instruction
225 State House
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

For presentation at the 80th annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, Massachusetts.

April 7-11, 1980.

SP 013 296



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The ideological foundation of the Boy Scouts of America was formed toward the turn of the century. Three men were chiefly responsible for it. Sir Robert Baden-Powell was a British general and hero of the Battle of Mafeking in the Boer War. The American Daniel Carter Beard was at one time an avowed socialist who worked chiefly as an illustrator of boys' books and as a political cartoonist. Beard also wrote and illustrated something of a best-selling book called The American Boys' Handy Book. The third man, Ernest Thompson Seton, was of English birth, Canadian citizenship and American residency. He worked primarily as a naturalist writer and illustrator, being most famous for his stories of Lobo the wolf. These were the three "founders" of scouting in America. Each man was charismatic, strong-willed and idealistic. Each believed that modernization had made men weak and that western society was in a state of decay as a result. Independent of each other, Baden-Powell, Beard and Seton developed boys' organizations, in the hope that still malleable boys could be immunized from a decadent society by a strengthening of their character.

Seton, Beard and Baden-Powell were all middle-aged men at the turn of the century. Each of them was convinced that western society had been better in the days of his own youth. The chief products of all the advances of modern civilization, as they saw it, were decadence and degeneration: modern conveniences and a specialization of skills had made men weak, stupid and helpless; a detachment from nature had made men boring and wasteful; and an abandonment of spiritual values had made men frivolous, immoral and crude. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, a friend of all three founders, modern man was fast becoming "wishy-washy." Baden-Powell often harped about "spectatoritis." Modern man, he thought, having so much done for him, had lost the ability to do for himself.

The three founders were social reformers by coincidence. They could more accurately be desribed as romantics, supporting as they did Progressive-Era reforms because they judged them to be supportive of

traditional values. The Boy Scout movement itself was a means of accomodating to a new order by bandaging what the founders perceived to be cracks in the old.

The philosophical base of scouting was characterized first by a preoccupation with history. Apparently influenced by Spengler, Baden-Powell revealed a paranoic fear that western civilization had passed its peak and was receding into decay. History offered "proof" to him that the idleness, decadence and poor citizenship he saw were barometers of national deterioration. Daniel Carter Beard was an early adherent to Frederick Jackson Turner. Preoccupied with the frontier mystique and the pioneer image, Beard feared that the closing of the American frontier would allow the unique American character to atrophy. The Progressive Era was an historical juncture he felt in which American civilization would either be renewed or be drawn into oblivion.[1]

A second characteristic of scouting's philosophical base was the belief that modern man was physically, mentally and morally weak in comparison to his ancestors. General Baden-Powell lamented that his British troops in the Boer War were, as recruits,

> ...without individuality or strength of character, utterly without resourcefulness, initiative or the guts for adventure.... Modern conditions of life with its artificiality were making them members of the herd with everything done for them and with the fetish of 'safety first' ever before their eyes.[2]

Baden-Powell believed that the English working man was "going to pot," becoming soft due to a lack of self-discipline, unreliability and selfishness.[3]

Ernest Thompson Seton chose the American Indian Tecumseh as hero-symbol of his Woodcraft Indians, a forerunner of the Boy Scout organization, because he was "physically perfect, wise, brave, picturesque, unselfish, dignified."[4] Like Baden-Pwell, who believed

that English working men were being outperformed by Eastern and Southern Europeans, Seton feared that the "inferior" races' rise to world dominance was imminent because of their superiority in character.[5] Beard, too, echoed the same brand of social organicism:

> The upward progress of the human race begins with the first campfire. It is not an accident that virile races come from the wilderness of bitter countries; vigorous exertion, which was necessary in order to protect themselves from hard weather, and to supply themselves with food, developed both mind and body of the people and gave them a stamina and character not possessed by the inhabitants of softer climes.... We must be on our guard to see that modern conditions do not soften our fiber until, when confronted with hardships, we become as helpless as a hermit crab without a shell.[6]

A third tenet of the Boy Scout founders' philosophy was the belief that the spiritual catharsis for modern man must take place outside the environs of the industrial city. The three men were convinced that the modern urban environment was not only detrimental to one's character, but to one's body and mind as well. So the youth movements' activities would be concentrated in the countryside. The "childsaver" Charles Loring Brace had popularized the idea of transporting delinquent and "weakly" American city children "back to" labor-short farms in the hope that the mere change of environment would reform and strengthen them.[7]

The founders believed strongly in the notion of conservation, but, to them, conservation involved not only land, but people and values as well. Beard, for example, believed in the existence of a distinct American character linked to an idealization of nature and a suspicion of the artificial. He thus conceived of society organically: the environment molds men and men mold their environment, so weak men make weak societies. A natural equilibrium existed in society, he thought, that was upset by the artificial restrictions formed in the urban environment.[8] Thus, the boys' organizations which each of the

three men founded, which were antecedents of the Boy Scouts, idealized men who lived (or had lived) close to the land and in symbiosis with it.

All this was not merely knee-jerk reaction to social change. There were, for example, large doses of the social reformers' environmental theory included in the founders' thought. Modern man was a degenerate form of Homo Sapiens because his surroundings had caused him to be so, they concluded. Also like the Progressive reformers, the Boy Scout founders were firm believers in educationsl training. If one were trained properly, they thought, the deleterious effects of environment could be withstood. Character building was to supplement or replace what was considered to be an inadequate educational system -- one which taught boys and girls how to take tests but not how to be men and women and good citizens.

All this, of course, pointed to youth. The rise to prominence near the turn of the century of a large middle-class paralleled the discovery of a new type of people -- adolescents, now distinct from young adults. Psychologists of the era were fond of writing about the special nature of the boy adolescent in particular: his alleged purity, innocence, plasticity,"[9] and his potential for good. These "innate" characteristics were worth preserving, it was thought. If the proper attention were paid him, the boy could be prevented from becoming what a bad environment would make him. There was a sense, therefore, that adolescents were not as responsible for their character as were adults, and were, thus, more deserving of aid.[10]

The eminent psychologist G. Stanley Hall compared the adolescent to a savage and other psychologists and educators followed his tack.[11] Like savages, boys were spontaneous, energetic, physical and innocent products of natural evolution, unlike adults who degenerated in the unnatural environment of the industrial city from their "natural" evolutionary role. One psychologist compared "boy epochs" -- periods in the evolution of a boy's personality and character according to his age -- to "race epochs" -- periods in the ascent of mankind from the

animals.[12] In his scheme, early adolescence was labeled the "gang period," an age in which individual boys fell in with the habits of the group, which were normally determined by the strongest members.[13] Later adolescence was described as the "chivalric period" when the boy would yearn for glory, seek competition, and be attracted to romantic stories of knighthood and deeds of valor.

The essense of the concept was that boys must not be forced into being adults lest their natural evolution be endangered. The idea was not to coddle the boy but to offer him independence and respect his right of self-determination -- to nurture him. As Seton put it, "We do not have to reform them, but rather keep them from being deformed .... bad boys are simply overenergetic, or misdirected good boys profoundly disguised....[14]

For both the founders of scouting and most social reformers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the impoverished street kid represented the worst result of modern society's degenerative influence.[15] The city boy was considered physically, mentally, and morally inferior to his country counterpart. Among city youths, for example, there was such evidence of decadence and degeneracy as "thieving, untruthfulness, dishonesty, lack of pride, disobedience, impudence, [and] irregular attendence at school."[16] According to Dan Beard's biographer, the Boy Scout founders and others saw that trinity of socialization, church, home and school, losing its influence with city youth to the motion picture houses and skating rinks.[17]

Realizing, however, that it was unlikely that parents in civilized societies would allow their boys to be raised under primitive conditions just to insure their sound character formation, the Boy Scout founders settled on the concept of character education. They believed that if character could be taught to adolescents before they became adults and the process of character formation became irreversible, they could be made immune to the decadent forces of their environment and their opportunity for success would be assured.

Businessmen, as well as psychologists and educators, developed a favorable attitude toward character education. Young executives who were products of character training programs were often preferred to those educated in vocational schools or the liberal arts. Edward Kirkland writes that businessmen thought there must be a "hardening of the will to fit it for the executive, directive and administrative tasks. The era had a word for it, 'gumption'."[18] So, character, which had been something one just had, could now, many believed, be taught and learned.

But not all those who supported character training agreed as to its purpose. G. Stanley Hall, for example, was interested in the building

of strong social communities, while Ernest Thompson Seton wished to promote self-reliant individualism. This dichotomy of purpose for character training became the central dichotomy with which the philosophies of all the 20th century youth movements would be determined: were youths to be disciplined and made to conform or were they to be strengthened as individuals to be self-reliant? To the founders of the Boy Scouts of America, self-reliance was paramount. With wealthy businessmen inheriting control of the organization after its founding, however, the pendulum would swing the other way.

The Boy Scouts was only one of many youth organizations formed near the fin de siecle. In the late nineteenth century in the United States alone were formed the Brotherhoods of St. Andrew, the Agassiz Association, the Band of Hope, the Juvenile Good Templars, the Captains of Ten, Forbush's Knights of King Arthur, the Loyal Temperance Legion, the Epworth League, and, of course, Ernest Thompson Seton's Woodcraft Indians and Daniel Carter Beard's Sons of Daniel Boone and Boy Pioneers.[19] To some extent this plethora may reflect a universal trend toward forming and joining groups. Still, these were groups catering solely to youth.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell was the founder of the British Boy Scouts, the first national unit in what was to become an international chain of Boy Scout organizations. While still detached in Southern Africa during the Boer War, General Baden-Powell initiated scouting as a program to make stronger individuals out of his "poor recruits."[20] Training in scouting skills--pioneering, woodcraft, tracking, etc.--he hoped would instill his men with such fundamental virtues as "dependability, initiative, and resourcefulness."[21] He published his program, titled Aids to Scouting so that all British soldiers might know of it.[22]

After the war, Baden-Powell returned to the British Isles to find that Victorian England had had its dark underside exposed. He was shocked by the social decay (crime, drunkenness, "hooliganism," vandalism, vice, poverty, begging), "spectatoritis," and the physical weakness of the young men.[23] Yet, he also found, to his surprise, that groups of boys all over

England had adopted his book, Aids to Scouting, and formed "patrols" of their own in order to play his scouting games.[24] What was good enough for the country's adults, Baden-Powell concluded, was good enough for its future adults.

While developing the germ of the "boy scouting" idea, Baden-Powell conducted an investigation of his own in an attempt to extract all that was best from already existing youth organizations. Baden-Powell drew most heavily, however, from Seton, who had founded his own Woodcraft Indians in 1902, and from Beard, who had founded the Sons of Daniel Boone in 1905 and the Boy Pioneers two years later.[25] The three schemes were remarkably similar. Boys would pretend to be American Indians or American frontiersmen in play, in uniform, and supposedly, in ideals. Boys' "gangs" were converted into "bands" or "stockades" with social hierarchies ranging from Daniel Boone or Head War Chief to tenderfoot or brave. Awards-"coups" or "top notches"-were given by standards, not by competition. The boy was to have a good time, do things he would normally want to do and, at the same time, become "character-trained" with no deliberate effort.

Most do's and don'ts of the three organizations, moreover, concerned conservation and wildlife preservation. Honors were given for physical fitness, athletics, nature study, and nothing else. There was little mention of citizenship or conformity and only a little moralizing about smoking, drinking, and gum-chewing. The organizations were largely non-political, though Seton did campaign against militarism, "money-getting" and "false patriotism." Of 30 members of the national council of the Woodcraft Indians, only one might have been a businessman or politician. The other 29 were either camp directors, Literati, academics, or charity agency directors.[26]

Most importantly with the Indians, the Sons of Daniel Boone, and the Pioneers, the boys were on their own. Adult guidance was suggested but not considered necessary. The boys could form their own groups and operate them on their own.

Baden-Powell changed that much with his British Boy Scouts. In 1906, Seton sent Baden-Powell a copy of the Birch Bark Roll, the constitution of the Woodcraft Indians. Both men being excited by each other's ideas, a lengthy correspondence ensued.[27] In 1908, Scouting For Boys was published[28] and, by 1909, over 11,000 boys met at the Crystal Palace for the Boy Scouts' first mass rally.[29] Adhoc patrols formed throughout the British Isles like a "tidal wave".[30] By 1910, there were 123,000 Boy Scouts and Baden-Powell, euphoric with the success of his movement, exhorted, "Train your Scouts as individuals and then harness that individuality for the good of the whole."[31]

Baden-Powell was an unquestioned hero in an age some thought to be rapidly growing short of them, and the boys worshipped him. In contradistinction to Seton and Beard he allowed them to play soldier and he lectured to them about "good deeds" and service to one's family, community, and country. In addition, he gave scouting the hard sell to civic leaders. Each scout troop was to be spensered by existing adult organizations,[32] with reputable and qualified adults to serve as scoutmasters. Not only was Baden-Powell appealing to the boys as Seton and Beard had done, he was striving for the adults' support. Further, Baden-Powell wanted to prepare the boys for their real lives ahead and make them good citizens.[33] So, they were not only trained to survive in the forest, but in the concrete jungle as well.[34] Many of the merit badges that Baden-Powell designed, for example, pertained to aspects of "getting along" in urban-industrial society.[35]

The Boy Scouts of America was officially founded in 1910. The first official handbook was written in 1911 by Seton with much borrowed from Baden-Powell. But that which was borrowed is significant: the scout law stressing loyalty ("to the President, and to his officers, and to his parents, his country, and his employers. He must stick to them through thick and thin against anyone who is their enemy or who even talks badly of them"), duty ("he is to do his duty before anything else, even though he gives up his own pleasure, or comfort, or safety to do it"), obedience ("a scout obeys orders of his parents, patrol leader, or scoutmaster without question"), cheerfulness ("Scouts never grumble at hardships,

nor whine at each other, nor swear when put out"), and thrift;[36] the motto, "Be Prepared;" the "Daily Good Turn;" and an oath stressing strength of character. Baden-Powell had added citizenship training to the character building programs of Seton and Beard.

Baden-Powell's Boy Scout scheme was, at once, conformist and individualistic. In spite of the rigid conformist doctrine contained in the Scout oath and law, the assumption remained that character training would first make self-reliant individuals. Baden-Powell kept the "patrol" (a smaller unit than a troop--about 4 to 8 boys, comparable to a band or stockade) completely out of adult hands. He also let Seton write the outdoor training sections of the 1910 BSA Handbook, which comprised 3 1/2 of the book's 5 sections.[37]

In 1910, Seton became the Chief Scout of the BSA and Beard the National Scout Commissioner. For the next few years each man would devote the bulk of his time to the new organization. Through the efforts of William D. Boyce, Edgar Robinson, and other businessmen, the American branch of the worldwide movement slowly achieved solvency. The YMCA, meanwhile, provided the BSA with organizational support and with temporary quarters.

Just about everybody liked the Boy Scouts. Business leaders and politicians supported it because it would be good for society. Social reformers and educators supported it because it would be good for boys. The Daily Graphic appropriately described the Boy Scouts as "a kind of 'snowball' organization to which nobody could object."[38] Because scouting carefully avoided specific religious and political ideals, it could easily attach itself to an infinite variety of community and religious agencies. As is written in one of the BSA's early pamphlets,

scouting was for many such agencies the

> ...first practical program of mid-week activities they have ever had with which to reach their boys and has thus created a contact between church and boy which persists right through the years. It is bringing to many schools a realization of the fact that they have a responsibility to the boy which is much greater than supervising his class room work between 9 am and 3:30 pm. It has developed in thousands of boys a new loyalty to their homes and transformed the performance of innumerable irksome chores into willing and cheerful service.[39]

After a slow start, wealthy, but "progressive" businessmen in search of worthy institutions with which to be philanthropic, added the Boy Scouts to their lists. It was in great part because the philanthropists decided that the BSA was the most worthy of the many competing boys' organizations in 1910-1911 that the BSA survived them all.

In 1912, big money started coming in to BSA headquarters. Mrs. Russell Sage donated $7,000; Andrew Carnegie, $6,000; John D. Rockefeller, Jr., $6,000; George D. Pratt, $5,500; and Mortimer L. Schiff, $4,000.[40] (Remember these are 1912 dollars.) After 1912 the donors grew in number and their donations grew in size, while, at the same time, the Boy Scouts began to generate most of their operating capital through equipment sales, dues, and local council tithes, thus leaving most of the donated funds to finance massive expansion efforts.[41] By 1912, two years after the formation of the Boy Scouts of America by Seton, Beard, and Baden-Powell, the politicians and capitalists who were so conspicuously absent from the board of directors of Seton's Woodcraft Indians were found in abundance on the board of directors of the BSA.[42]

At about the same time the board members perceived the BSA membership becoming so large and cumbersome they decided to install a permanent bureaucracy to supplement the activities of the founders, who worked primarily on the lecture circuit. The BSA National Council was formed to manage the organization's everyday affairs, and James L. West, a foundation executive, was named executive secretary. West fairly well solidified his position at the helm of the BSA hierarchy by the First World War. The National Council under West's control centralized power, granting charters to local councils and supervising local operations. Twelve regional offices were created to serve, as Allan Richard Whitmore puts it, as "outpost service stations of the National Council. Registration of membership, uniforms, insignia, programs, literature, and leadership training and commissioning came from the national organization".[43] National leaders liked the trend, it seems, and Congress granted the BSA a charter even though the local leaders, along with Seton, Baden-Powell, and Beard balked at the suffocating deluge of red tape.[44]

West met early on with Beard to discuss "Americanizing" the movement.[45] Beard was in favor of this. The former radical socialist had become an ardent xenophobe in his older years. "Patriotism," he said, "and religion are inextricably bound... In fact, national loyalty provided the ultimate atonement for personal sin."[46] Beard, at first, supported American non-intervention in World War I feeling that the war was fit punishment for the decadent European countries. But, later, when the U.S. entered the war, Beard became excessively patriotic, believing that only the U.S. was capable of righting the Old World gone awry.

Beard criticized Seton's former Woodcraft Indian movement because Indians "had attacked American Pioneers" and been "allied with Foreign Monarchists...to impose tyranny on American patriots."[47] Seton responded in kind, calling the American pioneers (Beard's last organization was called the Boy Pioneers) "crude, smelly, cheating, wasteful, lawless bullies." Seton did not stop there. He criticized Baden-Powell and

the British Boy Scouts for being militaristic, and described Baden-Powell's philosophy as "army-building" instead of character-building.[48]

The BSA board of directors regarded both Beard and Seton as vain, tempermental artists detrimental to the movement, and declared Baden-Powell to be the sole founder of scouting.[49]

In December of 1915 Seton resigned from the BSA, claiming that West "had robbed the movement of its spirituality and introduced purely material meanings to it...Seton started it; Baden-Powell boomed it; West killed it." Too much control had been ceded to West, said Seton, a man who knew pitifully little about boys or the outdoors.[50]

West retorted, charging Seton with siding with anarchists and socialists against patriotism and good citizenship. West further accused Seton of criticizing U.S. participation in some of its past wars,[51] of objecting to having Boy Scouts pledge allegiance to the flag, and of objecting to the inclusion of a chapter on "patriotism" in the BSA Handbook, because scouting should "leave them free to support our country when they thought it was right and to damn it when they thought it was wrong."[52] When the word got out (leaked by Beard and West) that Seton was not a United States citizen, the U.S. Congress voted to require that all BSA leaders be American natives if the BSA was to receive a national charter.[53] So, Seton was urged out and his name disappeared from the Boy Scout literature.

Despite their antagonisms with each other, Baden-Powell, Seton, and Beard all protested West's growing power and his "Big Office" with its army of loyal functionaries. Not only did they criticize the multiplying red tape but also what they saw as the sublimination of outdoor activities to West's version of character building. To West, outdoor activities were just one means to an end. To Beard, Seton, and Baden-Powell, they were essential. Beard, West's chief critic after Seton's departure accused him of taking the "outing" out of scouting for the sake of efficiency and commercialization.

America's political and business leaders, however, seem to have been pleased with the BSA. In 1917, the BSA hierarchy imposed a strict loyalty requirement upon its membership. Those who did not assist in war-supportive activities were severely stigmatized. German-Americans who refused to assist in such activities were expelled.[54] Meanwhile, the boys participated in the war effort much as their British counterparts did; as timber cruisers for gun stocks, telegraph line watchers, and as government dispatchers for George Creel's Committee on Public Information.[55]

These activities gave West yet another favorable argument with which to sell scouting to civic leaders. In a war-time speech, West had said,

> One lesson of the present European war is that American boys must be trained in patriotism and in those homely virtues which would make for civic order and social stability. For this purpose, I know of no means so effective as those employed by the Boy Scouts.[56]

West then proposed that the Boy Scouts organization serve to prepare boys for military service.[57]

It was perhaps inevitable that the BSA's bureaucracy would grow as its membership grew. The men in power (both the founders and the large donors) had little time to spend with administration, so they left managers in control who were primarily interested in preserving the organization and their jobs. As the first bureaucrats faded away, their replacements meekly accepted arbitrary practices without knowledge of their underlying principles. In this way, a self-perpetuating bureaucracy could live indefinitely, quite apart from the parent ideas which had nurtured it and given it birth.

It is possible to detect a change in the Boy Scout leadership at the lowest level by the 1920's. As Allan Richard Whitmore demonstrates

through examination of the first 15 BSA annual reports, the scoutmasters of 1925 were, by occupation, business-oriented rather than "reform"-oriented as they had been in 1911. Whitmore found a change in the declared occupations of the scoutmasters from 3/4 in non-agricultural, non-commercial, and non-industrial fields in 1911 to 2/5 of the total in the same categories in 1925.[58] Such walks of life as minister, social worker, and teacher, suffered serious numerical declines between 1911 and 1925 in relation to other occupations represented in the reports.

The effect of the West years was to extirpate even an indirect social reform function of the Boy Scouts. Why mold boys who would create a new society when society is fine as it is? In the early 1920's, the BSA volunteered to lend full support to Americanizing efforts, with West describing scouting as "inherently an Americanizing program."[59] Obviously, James L. West did not share with the founders their antipathy for the state of the nation. But, then, he was not paid to.[60]

In an examination of the Boy Scouts of America in its first decade, Baden-Powell emerges as a transitional figure, responsible for its organization. Because of his influence it was perhaps inevitable that scouting would become an organization supportive of the status quo. As Baden-Powell arranged it, each scout troop was sponsored by a community agency, institution, or adult group willing to provide the troop's leadership and financial support. Each scout troop, then, and scouting itself, was dependent on the tolerant attitude of already-existing adult organizations.

One ramification of this, according to Whitmore, was that the BSA made no concerted effort to enlist underpriveleged for fear of controversy. With local adult organizations choosing the membership that generally meant no poor. Membership in the Boy Scouts, first, cost money. Second, adults with free time were necessary, thus excluding most working class folks.[61] As William Murray inadvertantly demonstrates

in his official history of the BSA, membership was densest in the wealthier areas of the United States.[62] So, in spite of the fact that the existence of poor boys and juvenile delinquents was the primary justification for the formation of the Boy Scouts, the BSA membership was overwhelmingly middle-class.

Scouting was at first a movement to promote the independence of men through self-reliance. As the institutionalization developed, the effect was more and more to promote the conformity of men, to have them fit in rather than stand out.[63] Even Beard and Baden-Powell became ambivalent as to their stand vis-a-vis the dichotomy. Seton may have been the only one to remain true to the Emersonian concept of the self-reliant man.[64]

If Seton had had his way in the early years, the Boy Scouts today probably would resemble more closely the Outward Bound program than scouting itself. The BSA's early history must have struck Seton with extreme irony. For when Seton talked about men who were "weak" because of excessive exposure to the comforts of civilization and the decadence of city life, he was talking about the very men who came to be in control of the Boy Scouts of America, an organization whose philosophy he was primarily responsible for.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Daniel Carter Beard, Hardly a Man is Now Alive: The Autobiography of Dan Beard (New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, 1939), p. 356. Beard claims that he strongly opposed the suggestion that the BSA be part of the English Boy Scouts organization, fearing that its "American character" would be lost. See also Allan Richard Whitmore, Beard, Boys, and Buckskins: Daniel Carter Beard and the Pioneer Tradition (Northwestern University: unpublished PhD. dissertation, 1970), pp. 271-272. Beard hoped for reform "by returning to the values of the Revolutionary generation. Reform would be sought within the historical traditions of America rather than through some unchannelled appeal to natural law or foreign experience."

[2]Lord Baden-Powell, Lessons of a Lifetime. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933), pp. 255-257.

[3]Similar sentiments are profuse in the early scout literature. For an excellent compilation of practically all the arguments in this vein, see James L. West, Our Country's Greatest Asset (New York: Boy Scouts of America, undated).

[4]Ernest Thompson Seton, Trail of an Artist-Naturalist: The Autobiography of Ernest Thompson Seton (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940) p. 376.

[5]Like Jack London, a firm believer in the "yellow peril," Seton predicted a Chinese rise to prominence due to their (1) respect for elders, (2) physical fitness, and (3) simple life.

[6]Beard, 360-361.

[7]Robert H. Bremner, From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1956), pp. 212-213; according to Mrs. B.A. Sinn and Kenneth B. Webb, "A Brief History of the American Camping Association," Light From a Thousand Campfires Ed. Kenneth B. Webb (Martinsville, Indiana: American Camping Association, 1960) organized camping in the U.S. began as a movement to take "weakly" city kids out to the country for physical fitness' sake; in H.S. Dinnock and C.E. Hendry, Camping and Character: A Camp Experience in Character Education (New York: New York Association Press, 1929) camping is said to have an ipso facto favorable effect on one's character; see also Calvin Coolidge, Foundation of the Republic: Speeches and Addresses (New York: Scribner's, 1926), pp. 67-68, Coolidge lauds the supposed inherent character building nature of farm life.

[8]Whitmore, 3-4, 134-135, 152.

[9]Plasticity was then used as a synonym for malleability and had, to my knowledge, not yet acquired most of the connotations it has as a term today. See Whitmore, pp. 271-272.

[10]See Bremner, pp. 213-213.

[11]See George Walter Fiske, Boy Life and Self-Government (New York: Association Press, 1912), p. 46ff. for a discussion of Hall's theories and their impact.

[12]Fiske, 150-168.

[13]For further discussion of this subject, see Seton, 375-376. Seton composed a list of "child instincts," 60 in all, which he claims are inherent in all boys.

[14]Seton, 375-376, 382.

[15]Whitmore, vii-viii; Bremner, 213-229, discusses the changing attitudes toward poverty -- from the view that poverty is a "good thing" to the admission that a background of poverty may be a hindrance to one's success rather than a boon. See also Anthony M. Platt, The Child Savers: The Invention of Juvenile Delinquency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 42-45.

[16]George L. Hayes, An Experiment in Character Education Conducted at School Number Twenty-Six, Indianapolis, Indiana (Indiana University, unpublished M.A. thesis, 1930).

[17]Hayes, from speech of President Taft's before an educator's meeting.

[18]Edward Chase Kirkland, Dream and Thought in the Business Community, 1860-1900 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1956), 111.

[19]John S. Haller, Jr. and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 195.

[20]Baden-Powell was born into an aristocratic family and educated at a private prep school. He led the British forces in the defense of Mafeking, considered by some to the turning point of the Boer War.

[21]Murray, 1-2.

[22]Aids to Scouting was not just a military manual. It contained stories of B-P's adventures and some ingenious scouting games. The games could be played almost anywhere. The editors of the magazine Boys of the Empire reprinted parts of it in 1900 under the title "The Boy Scouts," the first known usage of the phrase. See Russell Freedman, Scouting With Baden-Powell (New York: Holiday House, 1967), 148-149.

[23]William Hillcourt, Baden-Powell: Two Lives of a Hero (London: Heinemann, 1964), 249-251.

[24]Russell Freedman, Scouting With Baden-Powell (New York: Holiday House, 1967), 148-149.

[25]Beard ran his Sons of Daniel Boone organization through articles in the Women's Home Companion from 1906-1909. He quit the magazine, complaining of interference by the publishers with his movement, claiming "It is too masculine for the feminine mind." In 1909, he joined the Pictorial Review and started the Boy Pioneers, abandoning SDB to the Home Companion. See also Whitmore, 183-191.

[26]Ernest Thompson Seton, Manual of the Woodcraft Indians: The Fourteenth Birch-Bark Roll (Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1915), vi-vii.

[27]Hillcourt, 249-251.

[28]The first Scouting for Boys was like a Readers' Digest -- a compendium of short features, including Kim. See Hillcourt, 281-282.

[29]E.K. Wade, The Piper of Pax: The Life Story of Sir Robert Baden-Powell (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1924), 159.

[30]Hillcourt, 284.

[31]Hillcourt, 275-310.

[32]Hillcourt, 289-290; At first, scouting was not even to have its own organization, but the boys, not wanting to be Boy Scouts plus something else, insisted on a separate organization.

[33]Juliette Low, How Girls Can Help Their Country: Adapted From Agnes Baden-Powell and Sir Robert Baden-Powell's Handbook (1916), 106. It was not long before a multitude of girls were clamoring for membership in the Boy Scouts. In England, Baden-Powell created a separate organization for them called the Girl Guides. In the United States, two other organizations evolved of their own volition but with BSA encouragement: the Camp Fire Girls (1910) and the Girl Scouts of America (1912).

It was Baden-Powell's contention that girls should have character development and citizenship training like the boys "but with activities centered on homemaking and mother-craft." Juliette Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts of America did not disagree. The girls were expected to learn outdoor skills and be physically fit like the boys, but, according to Low, "She is sure to have to 'keep house' some day,..." Brave, clean, and reverent were missing from the Girl Scout Law and purity was included. Needlewoman, laundress, housekeeper, and child-nurse were subjects of Girl Scout merit badges along with physical fitness, camping, and automobiling. It was suspected by both Baden-Powell and Low that good character could

do no one any harm, and was just as much needed by the "woman behind the man" as by the man himself. If Boy Scouting was a covert attempt to reinforce the myth of the self-made man, then, it may be just as well argued that Girl Scouting was a covert attempt to reinforce the cult of true womanhood.

[34]It is interesting to note that the 1910 by-laws of the BSA use "self-control" instead of the previously popular term "self-reliance" in describing the ideal boy's character.

[35]See Seton and Baden-Powell, Boy Scouts of America: Official Handbook: Woodcraft, Scouting, and Life-craft(New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1910), 16. The merit badges offered by the BSA cover practically any aspect of "getting along" in contrast to Seton's back-to-nature emphasis.

[36]One of the requirements for first-class scout rank was to deposit two dollars in a savings bank.

[37]See also Murray, 420; In March of 1910, the incorporators of the Boy Scouts of America spoke before the House Committee on Education seeking federal funding. The arguments stressed the outdoor aspects of scouting as inducive to self-reliant qualities, rather than the citizenship training, or "getting along" concept that would be emphasized later.

[38]Hillcourt, 283; The Boys' Club, organized nationally in 1906, was essentially limited to "inner-city," lower-class whites, while 4-H was essentially limited to farm children. Neither had the broad, non-specialized appeal of the Boy Scouts. See also Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford, 1964), 80; Gordon claims that the effect of scouting was to maintain ethnic and cultural separation, thus pleasing everyone. See also Whitmore, 255-257.

[39]The Boy Scout Movement and the Young Men's Christian Association (New York: Boy Scouts of America, undated), 10.

[40]Murray, 67-68.

[41]Murray, 68-70.

[42]Annual Reports, 1911-1920 (New York: Boy Scouts of America); Who Was Who in America, vol. 1, 1897-1942 (Chicago: A.N. Marquis, 1943). Checking the names of the men on the BSA Executive Board and Finance Committee in the years 1911-1920 against the biographical sketches in Who Was Who in America revealed the following: 16 men could not be located in Who Was Who; 17 men were clearly businessmen, with designations such as founder and editor, financier(2), banker(5), manufacturer, capitalist, merchant, broker, etc.; and 7 men were not clearly businessmen. In the latter group were Seton and Beard, the editor of the New York Times, an educator who specialized in military schools, the head engineer of the Panama Canal project, a "world traveler" and the head of the American Red Cross.

[43]Whitmore, 340.

[44]Whitmore, 335-336; See also Harold P. Levy, Building a Popular Movement: A Case Study of the Public Relations of the Boy Scouts of America (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1944), 67-68.

[45]Whitmore, 225.

[46]Whitmore, 225, 307-312, 322. As if that were not enough, according to Whitmore, "He supplemented patriotic idealsim with a willingness to use the Scout organization as an instrument to advance national interest and to eliminate minority dissent." (273)

[47]Whitmore, 282.

[48]New York Times December 6, 1915, 6; New York Times December 7, 1915, 4.

[49]Whitmore, 279-280.

[50]New York Times December 6, 1915, 6.

[51]Seton had denounced aggressive U.S. action in the Mexican War as well as British action in the Opium Wars.

[52]New York Times December 7, 1915, 4.

[53]The BSA, of course, was very much an official organization. It received a charter from Congress in 1915 protecting its symbols and organization and implicitly approving its methods and ideals. Each year thereafter the BSA has submitted to Congress an annual report.

[54]Whitmore, 318

[55]At the outbreak of the European War, Baden-Powell met with British War Secretary Kitchener to offer his aid. Kitchener told him to forget about fighting and organize his boys, for support work. And so he did. British Boy Scouts patrolled railroad lines, collected scrap, harvested flax, and sounded civil alert bugle calls. Though Baden-Powell had just completed a half dozen years "tramping the world" promoting "peace-scouting" as a panacea for international misunderstanding, there is no evidence that the chief scout of the world perceived any incongruity in his actions when the war broke out.

[56]James L. West, "The Scout Movement an Educational Asset" (New York: Boy Scouts of America, 1916), 8.

[57]Whitmore, 300. Teddy Roosevelt agreed with the proposition.

[58]Whitmore, 355.

59Tenth Annual Report of the Boy Scouts of America as Submitted to the Annual Meeting of the National Council New York City, March 25, 1920, 48.

60West had a background in charity administration, and was appointed to the Boy Scout post by Colin M. Livingstone, a Washington banker, and one of the early directors of the BSA. It appears that the founders may not have even been consulted about the appointment.

I do not mean to question West's humanitarian ideals. But he was primarily interested in "helping" the "needy" to adjust to a society to which he had himself adjusted very well. In the end, West knew who paid him, and did not upset them. The founders had not had that worry.

61Murray, 285; Whitmore, 252-253. According to Whitmore, the BSA made no concerted effort to enlist underpriveleged for fear of controversy. It allowed local organizations to determine the membership, and that generally meant no poor.

62Murray, 285.

63Whitmore, 208; Sad to say, some of the foremost competitors of the Boy Scouts for the allegience of boys were militaristic organizations. The Boys' Brigades in Scotland and England was a very large arganization, and its popularity may have pressured the Boy Scouts into a more military attitude. In the U.S., publisher William Randolph Hearst founded the American Boy Scouts, designed to promote manliness and patriotism through military training. Hearst left in a dispute in 1910, leaving the administration of the organization in the hands of retired army officers who heavily emphasized drill, discipline, and mock battle training.

64See Levy, 91-92, 84; By the time of the Second World War, the Boy Scouts were subject to growing criticism of their methods. Some, seeing youth movements as breeding conformists for totalitarianism because of the European evidence, feared an American counterpart to Fascist Youth or the Hitler Jugend. In 1941, the New York Times published a report of a study,,the evidence of which could have propounded those fears. A volunteer leader of many years standing, examining Boy Scout methods, concluded that "by employing emotional conditioning and indoctrination rather than promoting intellectual insight, the Boy Scout movement runs the hazard of making its members subservient and pliant to the will of others and thus potentially docile to totalitarianism."

Another study showed that Boy Scouts prefered authoritarianism on the part of the scoutmaster to democratic structure.